

REMARKS

Claims 1, 3-4, 6-7, 9-11 and 13-26 are pending in this application. By this Amendment, claims 1 and 11 are amended to overcome the rejections and correct antecedence. Claim 3 has been amended to properly depend from claim 1. Claim 19 is amended to further distinguish the claimed subject matter. Claims 2, 5, 8 and 12 are canceled.

No new matter is added by this Amendment. The language added to claims 1 and 11 can be found in original claims 2 and 12, respectively. The language added to claim 19 can be found on page 22, line 2 through page 23, line 3 of the specification.

I. Allowable Subject Matter

Applicants note with appreciation that claims 16-18 are allowable.

II. Drawing Objections

Figures 7, 8 and 9 were objected to for not being properly designated Prior Art. Therefore, Applicants submit Replacement Drawing Sheets 6 and 7 with Figures 7, 8 and 9 properly labeled Prior Art.

The drawings were further objected to for failure to show every feature of the invention specified in the claims. In particular, the "polygonal posts" recited in claim 19 were not shown in the drawings. Thus, "polygonal posts" in claim 19 has been amended to "polygonal cores" as described in the specification, for example at page 21, lines 5-11, page 26, lines 12-21 and shown in Figures 5A-5C.

III. Rejection Under 35 U.S.C. §102(b)

A. Chiu

Claims 1, 4, 7, 10 and 20 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as allegedly being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,777,789 ("Chiu"). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Chiu discloses a light tunnel comprised of four mirrors assembled to form a hollow rectangular mirror tunnel. The sides of the tunnels are connected in such a manner that the end of one side is attached the front surface of the adjacent side.

However, Chiu does not teach or suggest that each of the plurality of flat plates is disposed in such a manner that the end portion of one of the flat plates at one end extends beyond a rear surface of another of the flat plates adjacent to the same end at the contact portion of each flat plate as recited in claim 1.

Therefore, Applicants submit that Chiu does not teach or suggest all of the limitations recited in claim 1, and that claims 1, 4, 7, 10 and 20 are allowable. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection are thus respectfully requested.

B. Strobl

Claims 1-3, 5-6, 8-9 and 11-15 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as allegedly being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,771,870 ("Strobl"). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Strobl discloses a method of manufacturing a hollow rectangular-shaped reflective tube composed of large sheets of thin glass that can be coated with a reflective material. While the Patent Office alleges that Strobl teaches that each of the plurality of flat plates is disposed in such a manner that the end portion of one of the flat plates at one end extends beyond a rear surface of another of the flat plates adjacent to the same end at the contact portion of each flat plate as recited in claims 1 and 11, Applicants strenuously disagree with this allegation.

The Patent Office alleges that Figure 1 of Strobl discloses the subject matter recited in amended claims 1 and 11. However, it is quite clear that Figure 1 does not disclose that each of the plurality of flat plates is disposed in such a manner that the end portion of one of the flat plates at one end extends beyond a rear surface of another of the flat plate adjacent to the

same end at the contact portion of each flat plate as recited in amended claims 1 and 11 and shown in Figure 1.

Furthermore, Figure 1 of Strobl appears to be the conventional art described on pages 2-3 of the specification and shown in Figure 8. The invention as recited in amended claims 1 and 11 provides benefits over the conventional art of Figure 8. In particular, optical rods of the conventional type are vulnerable to an external force applied to the vertical reflector plates in the vertical direction. See page 2, lines 22-24 of the specification.

Therefore, Applicants submit that Strobl does not teach or suggest all of the limitations recited in claims 1 and 11, and that claims 1, 3, 6, 9, 11 and 13-15 are allowable. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection are thus respectfully requested.

C. Kim

Claim 19 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as allegedly being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,734,768 ("Kim"). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

The Patent Office alleges that Kim teaches substantially polygonal cores being connected by the spacers.

However, Kim actually teaches a separation chuck that permits the optical fiber to be removed from the alignment apparatus after the alignment process, i.e., that permits the alignment plates to be pulled apart from contact with each other. See column 4, lines 55-58 of Kim. According to Kim, the separating chuck is not used during the alignment process but after the alignment process. In other words, when the "spacers" according to Kim are in use, the adjacent cores are touching. The touching adjacent cores are separated after formation to enable removal of the optical fiber.

This is the exact opposite of what is recited in claim 19. As recited in claim 19, the spacers separate at least two of the substantially polygonal cores that are adjacent such that

the surface of the at least two adjacent cores do not touch when the spacers are inserted. In other words, the spacers prevent adjacent cores from touching when the spacers are in use.

Therefore, Applicants submit that claim 19 is allowable as Kim does not teach or suggest all of the features of claim 19. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection are thus respectfully requested.

IV. Conclusion

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and prompt allowance of claims 1, 3-4, 6-7, 9-11 and 13-26 are earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further would be desirable in order to place this application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number set forth below.

Respectfully submitted,

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Amendments to the Drawings:

The attached replacement drawing sheets 6 and 7 make changes to Figs. 7, 8 and 9 and replace the original sheets 6 and 7 with Figs. 7, 8 and 9.

Attachment: Replacement Sheets